

Growing Euphorbia and Jatropha from Seed

With the vast majority of succulent plant seeds the key words are Warm, Close and Bright. Sow the seeds on the top of a good quality compost (press larger Jatropha seeds into the surface) and water (spraying is best) with a dilute fungicide solution (Chinosol or a copper based compound). Seal in a plastic bag and place somewhere warm and light (20 – 30 Deg C).

Germination given ideal conditions as listed above should take 5 – 21 days. Growth is quite fast and by the end of the first year you should have plants that look like miniatures of the eventual adult plant. Pot up when large enough into good quality cactus compost. Growth will suffer a slight check at this first potting on as the plants resent the disturbance of their roots.

Subsequent potting on should involve the whole root ball so as to minimise the disturbance. Extra care should always be taken with Euphorbia as the latex sap is a best an irritant and at worst toxic.

Flowering can occur in some species from the 3rd summer onwards, but many, especially the larger types take considerably longer to reach flowering maturity.

The flowers are simple and in many species male and female flowers are on separate plants.

Some species are almost hardy, especially those from the inland, higher altitude habitats. Some Euphorbia will remain charming miniatures, whereas some will grow (given space) into towering giants resembling cacti. Jatropha will take on all sorts of shapes with their strange swollen trunks.